

A-Z of Conservation volunteering opportunities in the National Forest

Ashby Canal Association

We are a charity looking after the Ashby Canal, and working to restore the canal back to water northwards to Measham. We welcome any kind of volunteer help.

During the autumn, winter and spring months we hold regular work parties – usually on the third Sunday of each month. We usually start around 10am. Our regular meeting place is Snarestone Wharf, off Quarry Lane, Snarestone, DE12 7DD, though sometimes we work elsewhere along the canal.

If strenuous physical work is not for you, there are many less active support and administrative roles you might wish to consider, such as helping with our publicity, assisting with our archive of documents and photographs, maintaining contact with our magazine advertisers, liaising with schools, helping at events, and so on.

Contact: arran.jenkins@ashbycanal.org.uk or anne.marie@ashbycanal.org.uk

Website: <http://www.ashbycanal.org.uk/volunteering/>

Ashby Footpaths Group

We are a constituted group and our aim is to maintain and improve public footpaths and rights of way in Ashby de la Zouch and surrounding area while encouraging more people to get out and enjoy them. We are also a social walking group with monthly 'walk talk and snip' outings sometimes including a litter pick if necessary.

Contact: Jacqui Beard ashbyfootpathgroup@outlook.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/853480392704253>

Bradgate Park Trust

Volunteering with the Bradgate Park Trust provides a chance to make a real contribution to Bradgate Park and Swithland Wood's wildlife, landscape conservation and rich heritage, as well as championing our visitor experience and sharing a passion for the Estate.

We offer various volunteering opportunities at Bradgate Park and Swithland Woods, in particular for visitor centre, conservation (particularly dry-stone walling) and education volunteers.

Contact: volunteers@bradgatepark.org or 0116 236 2713 ext. 26

Website: <https://www.bradgatepark.org/volunteer>

Branston Friends

We are a group of community volunteers in Branston, Burton upon Trent, working together to improve the local area for the benefit of residents and visitors. Activities include conservation work at Branston Leas Nature Reserve, planting up and looking after floral displays and community litter picks.

Contact: kevin_gaunt@hotmail.co.uk

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/groups/1597554083725240/?locale=en_GB

Burton Conservation Volunteers

Local wildlife and conservation group dedicated to improving the environment, promoting wildlife conservation, encouraging community awareness for over 30 years in and around Burton upon Trent and further afield. Normal workdays are Sundays.

Contact: Lawrence Oates – bcvflowerman@gmail.com or 07432 608931

Website: <http://www.bcv.org.uk/>

Charnwood Conservation Volunteers

Charnwood's many green spaces are cared for by the Ranger Service. Their role is to manage both public enjoyment and to improve their value for wildlife and eco system services.

The Ranger Service offers opportunities to become a volunteer ranger. This will involve undertaking practical conservation tasks, leading wildlife walks, organising countryside events, wildlife recording or simply patrolling our green spaces.

Charnwood Conservation Volunteers take part in a whole range of conservation events throughout the year, working on some of Charnwood's most important wildlife sites, including The Outwoods. We supply all the tools, training and help lead the tasks.

Contact: charnwood.rangerservice@idverde.co.uk

Website: <https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/rangerservice>

Circularity

Do you want to change your community for the better? Would you like a new hobby, or to be a part of something new? Maybe you'd like to meet new people and make new friends for life?

At Circularity.org we provide spaces and places for people to have experiences and for charities and non-profits to provide their services.

We've got a lovely library. We've got an ace allotment. We've got a nifty Wellbeing Wagon. We run a thriving repair cafe. We're a friendly bunch. We love providing free resources and opportunities for people in the community to come together. We'd love you to get involved. Why wait?

Website: Be a part of Circularity as a volunteer here <https://www.circularity.org/>

Charnwood Forest Geopark volunteers

Charnwood Forest has a geological story that dates back nearly 600 million years, and is home to some of the oldest animal fossils ever described. We're keen to hear from anyone who would like to volunteer to help us look after this special landscape. From geo-conservation and wildlife recording to social and oral history, there's plenty to get involved in.

Contact: abrandbarker@nationalforest.org

Website: <https://www.charnwoodforest.org/get-involved/>

Coleorton & New Lount Volunteer Group

We are a friendly bunch of local people set up to do practical work in two local wildlife nature reserves - with a few social events too! We are always on the lookout for new members. Please contact us if you are interested in conservation work; if you could spare a few hours on a Tuesday or a Saturday; if you want to get outdoors, make some new friends, stretch some muscles or make a positive difference to the area.

Twice weekly conservation task days throughout the year (**Tuesdays** and **Saturdays**) at Coleorton Wood and New Lount Nature Reserve.

Contact: Ian McCormick, Secretary – coleorton11@gmail.com

Website: <https://cnlvg.weebly.com/>

Donisthorpe Community Association

Formed to organise, encourage and promote events (social, cultural, heritage, sport and educational) and fundraising activities in the village for the benefit of the residents, and support other groups with similar aims. Volunteers are always welcome for the various village projects, which include:

- Donisthorpe Community Orchard
- Friends of Oakthorpe, Donisthorpe and Acresford Memorial Gardens
- Donisthorpe Woods CIC

Contact: Donisthorpe.community.group@gmail.com for more information.

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/DonisthorpeCommunityGroup?locale=en_GB

Forestry England Volunteer Rangers

Sence Valley:

We offer a variety of volunteering opportunities, including as wardens, litter pickers, or practical conservation and maintenance. The group meet on the third Sunday of every month from 09:30 - 12:30.

Visit <https://www.forestryengland.uk/sence-valley/volunteering-sence-valley> or <https://public.forestryengland.uk/EOI/> and select Sence Valley for more details.

National Forest Community Woodlands:

Roving Rangers meet monthly (Thursdays) and carry out conservation projects and site maintenance across community woodlands in the National Forest, including Bignall's Wood, Seale Wood, Gresley Wood, Poppy & Robin Woods and more!

Visit <https://www.forestryengland.uk/volunteering-national-forest-community-woodlands> or <https://public.forestryengland.uk/EOI/> and select 'National Forest & North Staffordshire Beat Wide' for more details.

Contact: info_nationalforest@forestryengland.uk

Hicks Lodge Volunteers:

Conservation volunteers

Meeting weekly on Tuesdays, 9.30am until lunchtime, tasks undertaken are a mixture of conservation project work and site maintenance. A friendly and welcoming group, no previous experience is needed to join in.

Bird hide wardens

Helping with the opening and closing of the bird hide and being a friendly face to visitors. Please get in touch if you're interested in being a part of our team of wardens at Hicks Lodge.

Visit <https://www.forestryengland.uk/hicks-lodge/volunteering-hicks-lodge> to register interest

Friends of Coalville Park

Established in 2019, we are a small group of friendly volunteers who want to make a difference to our local park, and we are seeking members of the community to join us. Whether you want to share your ideas, or get involved with a project important to you, we'd love to hear from you. The park will be the location for one of ten new Community Woodlands, and there will be a chance to get involved in its design and creation during winter 2023/4. For more information, or to register your interest check out our website or facebook page, or send us an email.

Contact: friendsofcoalvillepark@gmail.com

Website: <https://friendsofcoalvillepark.org/> or Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/friendsofcoalvillepark>

Friends of Scalpcliffe Wood, Burton Upon Trent

A community group, working with site owners with East Staffordshire Borough Council, to protect the ancient woodland, habitat and species within Scalpcliffe Hill Nature Reserve and its surrounding area. We run monthly work parties to carry out essential management and conservation projects to ensure the area is maintained, protected, and enhanced for current and future generations.

Contact: foswde15@gmail.com

Heartwood Community Woodfuel group

Our Vision - To become the voluntary workforce of choice for woodland management in the National Forest

Our Mission – “The purpose of Heartwood Community Woodfuel Group is to increase the supply of sustainable wood fuel, promote a woodland culture enhancing local woodland habitat and provide broader opportunities for community engagement.”

Heartwood are a fully inclusive group and have a base (Heartwood Hub) at Rough Park, Lount where group activities, green woodworking and charcoal making take place. We manage several woodlands in the National Forest (Foxley Wood, Linton; Nether Hall Wood, Hartshorne; Woodcote Wood, Smisby) and carry out woodland management work.

Community Woodfuel project – a membership scheme operating various task days and offering training opportunities throughout the year. Come and spend a day in the woods helping with woodland management in the National Forest, and you get to take wood home with you!

Join us – There is no formal commitment needed from you, the group is managed very informally, although health and safety in the woods is our highest priority. With around 130 members we are a growing group, so please contact us for more information.

Contact: chairman@heartwoodhof.org.uk

Website: <https://www.heartwoodhof.org.uk/>

Leicestershire County Council conservation volunteers

Our Rangers care for a variety of woodlands and country parks across the County. We have various conservation groups operate around the National Forest undertaking conservation tasks on most days of the week, including at:

- Beacon Hill Country Park (near Loughborough)
- Snibston Colliery Park, Coalville
- New Lount and Coleorton Wood
- Donington le Heath Woodland
- Bagworth Heath Woods
- Donisthorpe Woodland Park

Contact: countryparks@leics.gov.uk or 0116 305 5000.

Website: <https://www.leicscountryparks.org.uk/regular-groups/>

Melbourne Footpaths Group

Local footpaths group operating in and around Melbourne village to help look after and maintain the Parish footpaths. There are regular guided walks and occasional task days.

Website: <https://melbournefootpathsgroup.wordpress.com> or Facebook
www.facebook.com/MelbourneFootpathsGroup

Mimi's Wood volunteers, Bretby

Mimi's Wood is privately owned and managed by a local family who are passionate about retaining green space for the benefit of the landscape, wildlife, and local community. A group of volunteers meet throughout the year to undertake a variety of woodland management tasks and survey wildlife. The group was formed in November 2021 and is open to new members.

If you would like further information about Mimi's Wood or to find out about volunteering opportunities please get in touch.

Contact: mimiswood@protonmail.com

Moira Furnace Volunteers

If you can spare a few hours, or more contributing to the upkeep and continued success of the Furnace, whatever your skills or wishes to learn new ones - we would be pleased to welcome you to our small but dedicated team. Ages, genders and abilities are no barrier to joining our crew.

Activities include working within the grounds, helping at events, also during our open season supporting visitors in the museum and shop. Closed season work continues with maintenance of our buildings, woodland, boat and canal side.

Contact: office@moirafurnace.org or 01283 224667

Website: <https://www.moirafurnace.org/jobs-and-volunteering>

The National Forest volunteers

Heart of the Forest volunteers: Help us look after the sites, wildlife and communities within the Heart of the National Forest. Regular volunteer days will be held on a fortnightly basis, from 10.00am to 2.30pm on Fridays, and there will also be occasional weekend sessions.

<https://www.nationalforest.org/get-involved/volunteer-national-forest-company>

Meta Garden volunteers: Do you have a passion for plants, and have a day a month to spare? Help us to care for the gold medal-winning RHS Chelsea garden, designed by Joe Perkins and rehomed at Conkers Discovery Park.

Wildlife Recorders: if you are interested in any type of wildlife from birds to beetles, or flowers to fungi, then we need you! We are growing a network of people who can help us to gather data about the wildlife in the National Forest. Join us for an annual programme of guided walks, and training for skills such as identification and photography.

National Forest Way volunteer Rangers: join our team of footpath guardians, and carry out self-led audits and inspections of the National Forest Way and other promoted walking routes.

Occasional task days are held (usually Thursdays) to carry out maintenance and repair work.

Contact: enquiries@nationalforest.org

Website: <https://www.nationalforest.org/get-involved>

National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas

For those of you who enjoy being outside, planting, pruning, doing grounds maintenance, then we recommend our working weekends. These are the first full weekend of each month and you are most welcome to come along.

For more information about our volunteer opportunities, visit our website.

Website: <http://www.thenma.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer/>

National Trust Volunteers (Calke Abbey)

Have you ever thought of becoming a volunteer? Well at Calke Abbey we believe that we have a volunteer role that caters just for you. Do you have free time on your hands and wish to spend it engaging with eager visitors as they visit our country house in decline? Or possibly the outdoors is more your calling, where you can spend a sunny Saturday helping in our gardens.

Find out more: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/calke-abbey/lists/join-our-team-of-volunteers>

National Trust Conservation Rangers (Staunton Harold and Foremark)

Would you like to help look after the habitats and visitor access surrounding Foremark and Staunton Harold reservoirs? If you fancy getting out into the countryside, want to stay active and meet new people, we might have the volunteer opportunity for you. We have a weekly conservation workday, or if you want something more flexible how about joining our reservoir champions who help keep our sites clean and safe. We also have vacancies on our visitor experience team to help out with events and welcoming visitors.

For more information, contact: foremarkandstaunton@nationaltrust.org.uk

Norris Hill Community Orchard

We are based in Moira, on the estates either side of Blackfordby Lane and the surrounding area – known as Norris Hill since long before the estates were built. Our group has leased a small plot in the village and planted fruit trees to create an orchard. We usually meet up on the first Sunday morning of each month to do a few jobs around the orchard and we are always pleased to see new faces, particularly folk from the immediate area. Other jobs are carried out on an ad-hoc basis. Please contact Bill for more information or to register your interest.

Contact: bill@billpiper.co.uk 07807 455246.

Overseal Footpaths Group

Local footpaths group operating in and around Overseal village to help look after and maintain the Parish footpaths. The group also holds weekly walks on Tuesday afternoons from various locations, and occasional task days on Wednesday mornings.

Contact: Dot Morson: dorothymorson@btinternet.com

Princes Wood Community Group

Princes Wood in Tatenhill is a community managed wood at the edge of the village. Mown pathways give access to native woodland, wildflowers and it is abundant with wildlife. Volunteer workdays take place throughout the year, including path maintenance, coppicing and tree pruning plus wildlife recording.

Community volunteer days are held twice a month (usually Friday). New members are always welcome to help maintain the woodland, and social events are encouraged.

Contact: clerk@tatenhillrangemoreparishcouncil.gov.uk

Rosliston Rangers Volunteer Group

Join in with the Rosliston Rangers and help out with a wide variety of tasks to help manage the amazing habitats at Rosliston Forestry Centre including tree work, conservation and wildlife surveys. We meet on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month between 10.00am - 3.00pm.

Contact: Environmental Education Project – rosliston@southderbyshire.gov.uk or 01283 535039

Sinai Park House Trust

Sinai Park House is a hilltop site (near Shobnall, Burton upon Trent) overlooking the Trent Valley, used as a sacred meeting place and a strategic outpost from earliest times. The Paget family reinvented the timber-framed shooting lodge as a stylish Elizabethan manor house with a 13th-century moat, and a host of extensions and refinements have been carried out every century since, all in the Medieval and Tudor style.

Now developing as a heritage attraction with education visits, the Trust are looking for volunteers to help with events, conservation work, and grounds maintenance.

Contact: kate@sinaiparkhouse.co.uk

Website: <https://sinaiparkhouse.co.uk/>

South Derbyshire Parklife Project

We welcome people who would like to be involved with the development and management of the parks and open spaces in South Derbyshire. There are a number of opportunities and initiatives where you can volunteer your time – for full details please contact the Parklife Officer:

Contact: parksandgreenspaces@southderbyshire.gov.uk or 01283 228 766

Sustrans

Sustainable Transport Charity Sustrans volunteers carry out a huge range of activities, from looking after the [National Cycle Network](#), leading rides or walks, helping to transform streets into places for people and volunteering in local schools and universities. We are always happy to hear from people who are interested in helping to maintain and check our network, including surveying and waymarking routes.

Website: <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer/>

Swadlincote in Bloom

Are you bored with looking at four walls? Do you really want to go and do something interesting, healthy and good fun? Come and help Swad In Bloom make a difference in Swadlincote!

We are looking for volunteers to help on our stalls, help with our gardening projects, help with fundraising, help with town tidy ups and so many more areas. We really want to make Swad bloom and we would love you to join us.

It can be an hour or two once a month, a regular weekly tidy up in the Morrisons bed, litter picking or helping by fundraising. We will never let volunteers work alone on any project and can guide you in what needs doing.

Contact: treasurer@swadinbloom.org or Facebook page @Swad_in_Bloom

Swannington Heritage Trust

Swannington Heritage Trust is an entirely volunteer run organisation maintaining 14 acres of former industrial heritage sites that are now managed as woodlands and grass heathland for the benefit of the community. We offer a calendar of events and activities, plus regular volunteering opportunities, including:

- Tours and guided walks
- Restoration and maintenance of heritage buildings and artefacts
- Adding to and cataloguing the Swannington Archives
- Environmental and conservation projects
- Community fun days, events and activities

For more information about the various tasks and how to get involved, visit our website:

<https://swannington-heritage.co.uk/trust/volunteer/>

The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)

We volunteer in local green spaces, nature reserves and beauty spots, carrying out a wide variety of work. You might be able to get involved in keeping footpaths clear and safe, or managing rare habitats for wildlife, in building dry stone walls, or helping schools build gardens to teach young people the value of nature. Weekly workdays on **Tuesdays, Wednesdays (AM), Thursdays and Saturdays** at various sites in the National Forest.

Come and join the team, learn new skills and access great training in the field of conservation and land management. We are also a well-respected provider of longer-term training for people who wish to work in the conservation sector, through our Volunteer Officer programme.

Contact: Kay Thompson kay.thompson@tcv.org.uk or Ben Woolley ben.woolley@tcv.org.uk

Website: <https://www.tcv.org.uk/midlands/tcv-national-forest>

Wildlife Trusts

Derbyshire: Living Landscapes project, based in the Trent Valley, to look after 11 reserves including Spring Wood and Carvers Rock. The volunteer team meet regularly to undertake practical conservation, monitoring and survey work.

<https://www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/support/volunteer/volunteer-opportunities>

Leicestershire: various supervised groups carrying out tasks on nature reserves in the County

<https://www.lrw.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer/>

Staffordshire: details of volunteering opportunities on reserves and at the Trusts' HQ

<https://www.staffs-wildlife.org.uk/get-involved/volunteering>

Whistlewood Common, Melbourne

Whistlewood is ten acres of community-owned land in Melbourne, South Derbyshire.

The site is designed along permaculture principles (a sustainable design framework) so that it will work for people, for wildlife and be a welcoming space for people of all ages and backgrounds. New additions to the site include a community garden and a Forest nursery.

We have an active volunteer programme, including a Duke of Edinburgh programme, and welcome people from all ages, backgrounds and abilities.

For more information about how to get involved, visit the website:

<https://www.whistlewoodcommon.org/volunteer/>

Woodland Trust

We cherish, campaign for and look after the country's woods, old and new and their associated wildlife. But we can't do it without you. Volunteers have been involved at every level of the Woodland Trust's work over the last 40 years and are an integral and valued part of our team. However long you've got, whatever your interests or strengths, you can help the UK's largest woodland conservation charity to make a difference.

Key sites in the Forest are:

- Willesley Wood (near Moira)
- Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Wood (Heather)
- Martinshaw Wood (Ratby)
- Top Wood (Grangewood/Linton)

Website: <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer-with-us/opportunities/>

Contact: volunteering@woodlandtrust.org.uk

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